

EM SSAB CHAIRS
Bi-Monthly Conference Call
September 19, 2011

Participants

<i>Board</i>	<i>Chairs/Representatives</i>	<i>Site Support Staff</i>
Hanford	Susan Leckband	
Idaho	Nicki Karst	
Nevada	Kathleen Bienenstein, Walt Wegst	Kelly Snyder, Denise Rupp
Northern New Mexico	Ralph Phelps, Robert Gallegos	Menice Santistevan
Oak Ridge	Maggie Owen, Ron Murphree	Melyssa Noe, Pat Halsey, Pete Osborne, Spencer Gross
Paducah	Ralph Young	Buz Smith, Eric Roberts, Lauren DeFazio
Portsmouth	Dick Snyder	Julie Galloway
Savannah River	Don Bridges	Erica Williams

DOE-HQ Representatives

EM-42	Catherine Alexander, Melissa Nielson, Elizabeth Schmitt
EM-43	Christine Gelles
EM-60	Joann Luczak
EMAB	Dennis Ferrigno

Opening Remarks

Ms. Catherine Alexander, Designated Federal Officer for the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), called the meeting to order.

Budget Update

Ms. Joann Luczak, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Program Planning and Budget (EM-60), provided a status update on the Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 and the 2013 budgets.

FY 2012

Ms. Luczak reported that Congress is poised to move forward with a CR for the FY 2012 EM budget that will extend through mid-November. The proposed CR includes an across-the-board reduction of 1.5% below EM's 2011 operating plan, the impacts of which will vary site by site.

Regarding the FY 2012 Congressional Budget Request, Ms. Luczak reported that EM received the House and Senate mark-ups late Friday, September 16. Although the mark-ups are still under review, she was able to share some possible high-level impacts and concerns at the site level. In particular, the mark-ups came in with figures below DOE's FY 2012 request level for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Oak Ridge, the Office of River Protection's Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), Portsmouth, and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Ms. Luczak

cautioned that House and Senate Marks are not final and at this stage the deliberations represent major concerns at the site level where both the House and Senate have proposed funding levels that are significantly lower than what EM would like.

FY 2013

EM sent its budget request for FY 2013 to the Office of Management and Budget on September 12 and has not yet received any feedback. Ms. Luczak hopes to share more information about the FY 2013 request with the Chairs during their October meeting, after she and her staff have finished briefing DOE senior management.

Waste Disposition Update

Ms. Christine Gelles, Director, Office of Disposal Operations (EM-43), provided an overview of highlights from EM's waste disposition activities.

High-Level Waste

EM is on track to completing a record year for production of high-level waste (HLW) canisters through the Savannah River Site's (SRS's) Defense Waste Processing Facility.

EM recently completed construction of the Idaho National Laboratory's (INL's) Sodium Bearing Waste Facility, also known as the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit. Actual treatment of sodium-bearing waste will hopefully commence later this fall. Ms. Gelles noted that completion of the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit is a significant achievement. Once start-up begins, EM intends to complete a treatment campaign within FY 2012. However, due to the uncertainty associated with a final disposal path for sodium-bearing waste, the treated canisters will remain on site in interim storage until EM is able to determine whether they meet WIPP's acceptance criteria as remote-handled transuranic waste (RH TRU), or need to be processed as HLW.

Transuranic Waste

EM marked a major milestone in September 2011 with the shipment of its first TRU PACT-III shipping container for large box contact-handled (CH) TRU. Use of the new package will help EM avoid some of the worker risk associated with reducing the size of large components that are included in SRS's legacy TRU inventory. The TRU PACT-III fleet will grow to six containers over the next five months and will help support SRS's accelerated TRU shipment program through the early months of 2013.

EM will celebrate another significant achievement by the end of September when WIPP accepts its 10,000th shipment. A large celebration commemorating the event will take place in mid-October; Secretary Chu and a number of elected officials and administration leadership are expected to attend.

Due to anticipated budget constraints, maintaining the momentum of EM's TRU program will be a challenge in FY 2012. However, the program remains focused on its strategic goal to strive for disposition of 90% of its legacy inventories by the end of 2015. EM has prepared for the likely reductions in funding by streamlining sites where it can simultaneously certify and ship TRU to WIPP in order to more fully utilize its resources. Sites that will ship to WIPP in FY 2012

include INL, LANL, and SRS. Based on the current budget outlook, Hanford and Oak Ridge will not resume shipments until the 2014-2015 timeframe.

Low-Level Waste

Due to insufficient funding, EM had to institute week-long furloughs over the July 4th and Labor Day holidays at the Nevada Nuclear Security Site (NNSS). By suspending low-level and mixed low-level waste (LLW and MLLW) operations for those two weeks, EM was able to avoid approximately \$600,000 in costs and finish the balance of the year. Approximately 1.8 million cubic feet of waste was disposed of at NNSS in FY 2011, a large component of which included waste that was generated by onsite remediation activities. EM is facing similar shortfalls in 2012 funding for solid waste disposition and only forecasts 1.2 million cubic feet of waste from all sites that will require disposal at NNSS. Ideally, the disposal cell will remain open throughout the year to support generator sites, even if it requires a reduction in the level of operations.

Waste Control Specialists, LLC (WCS) is constructing two disposal facilities in west Texas, near Andrews County. The first unit will be a relatively small commercial cell capable of accepting Class-A, B, and C LLW. The second unit will be a much larger federal disposal facility that can accept up to Class-C LLW and MLLW. This federal unit represents an important alternative to NNSS for higher-activity waste streams that cannot be disposed of at other DOE sites or the Clive facility in Utah that is owned and operated by EnergySolutions. Pending some competitive processes and high-level policy decisions, DOE may be able to start using the new WCS facility in FY 2012.

Discussion

Dr. Don Bridges of the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) asked if the WCS facility could handle Greater-Than-Class-C (GTCC) waste.

Ms. Gelles stated that the WCS facility, as currently licensed, cannot accept GTCC waste. That said, the WCS facility bears some similarities to the enhanced engineered trench that EM evaluated in its GTCC Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and that type of design could certainly be part of the solution for GTCC waste. She directed the Chairs to www.texassolution.com for more information on the WCS facilities.

Dr. Bridges asked if EM had approved the disposal of surplus plutonium (Pu) at WIPP.

Ms. Gelles indicated that EM has an interim action approved for the disposition of up to 800 containers of surplus Pu at WIPP. Assuming the Pu is repackaged, certified, and determined to meet the appropriate waste acceptance criteria (WAC), it will be acceptable for disposal at WIPP.

Mr. Ron Murphree of the Oak Ridge SSAB (ORSSAB) asked if the WCS facility would be an option for disposal of the technetium-99 material recovered from the decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of K-25.

Ms. Gelles could not respond because the detailed WAC for WCS's federal facility had not been fully developed. The WCS facility is a potential alternative to NNSS for technetium-99, but it may not be the most cost-effective alternative.

Environmental Management Advisory Board

Dr. Dennis Ferrigno, Vice Chair of the Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB), provided the Chairs with an overview of EMAB's mission and structure.

Like the EM SSAB, EMAB is an advisory board chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. EMAB reports directly to the EM Assistant Secretary and provides advice, information, and recommendations on a number of corporate issues, such as Project Management and Oversight, Strategic Planning, Contracts and Acquisition Strategies, Human Capital Development, and others.

EMAB members come from private industry, regulatory agencies, academia, stakeholder organizations, and local governments. They are classified as either Special Government Employees (SGEs) or representatives. The SGEs are appointed to provide expert advice and are subject to the conflict of interest and ethical obligations of regular federal employees. Representatives are appointed to serve on behalf of specific organizations or interests. Regardless of how they are classified, EMAB members all volunteer their time and are not compensated for their service to the Board.

EMAB holds semi-annual public meetings throughout the EM complex and produces recommendations that address issues identified by either the Assistant Secretary or the members. EMAB also convenes subcommittees to dive deeper into its annual work scope and draft reports for the full Board's consideration.

Dr. Ferrigno highlighted two of the Board's current subcommittees: the Acquisition and Project Management Subcommittee (APMS) and the Tank Waste Subcommittee (TWS). The APMS is charged with researching strategies and tools to help EM remove projects from the Government Accountability Office's High Risk List, and with identifying corrective actions and lessons learned. The TWS is charged with providing technical review of EM's tank waste cleanup programs. The first phase of the TWS's work began in May 2010 and focused on Hanford's WTP recommendations previously made by the External Flowsheet Review Team. The second phase of the TWS's work focused on the tank waste programs at Hanford and SRS, and, specifically, waste stream efficiencies, interim actions for accelerating waste disposition, and supplemental technologies for future treatment.

For more information on EMAB, its members, and its subcommittees, Dr. Ferrigno recommended that the Chairs visit www.em.doe.gov/emab.

Discussion

Dr. Bridges asked how many recommendations EMAB typically issues per year.

Dr. Ferrigno explained that in an average year, EMAB issues roughly 10-20 recommendations based on the work scope of its subcommittees. However, 2011 was a bit atypical in that, given the complexity and magnitude of the TWS's charge, EMAB issued 43 recommendations.

Ms. Susan Leckband from the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) asked if all of the committee members were volunteers.

Dr. Ferrigno explained that all of the full EMAB members and subcommittee members are volunteers. However, EM does contract with some technical consultants to help the Board's subcommittees with some of the more challenging material they are asked to review. The TWS technical consultants were all vetted by DOE's General Counsel for any conflicts of interest before assisting the Board.

Mr. Dick Snyder from the Portsmouth SSAB (PORTS SSAB) asked Dr. Ferrigno to comment on EMAB's administrative structure.

Dr. Ferrigno commented that EMAB is supported by the staff of EM Headquarters and at times receives additional assistance from federal field staff and support contractors in the production of its meetings.

Mr. Murphree asked if DOE is required to respond to EMAB's reports and recommendations.

Ms. Alexander stated that, per DOE policy, program offices are required to respond to FACA committee recommendations.

Chairs' Recommendations

Ms. Alexander reviewed the status of the local boards' approval for the three recommendations developed during the June 2011 Chairs' meeting. The recommendations include:

[Chairs Recommendation 2011-01](#): Recommendation on Asset Retention

[Chairs Recommendation 2011-02](#): Recommendation on Authorizing Funds for Movement of Historical/Cultural Artifacts

[Chairs Recommendation 2011-03](#): Recommendation on Using Rail Transport for Moving Waste

The Paducah CAB, PORTS SSAB, NNM CAB, ORSSAB, SRS CAB, and Nevada SSAB (NSSAB), approved all three recommendations. The INL CAB approved Recommendation 2011-01, but did not approve Recommendations 2011-02 and 2011-03. The HAB approved Recommendation 2011-02, but did not approve Recommendations 2011-01 and 2011-03.

The Chairs agreed to forward the recommendations to EM-1 with only signatures from the approving boards.

Fall 2011 Chairs' Meeting

The Chairs are scheduled to hold a public meeting via video teleconference (VTC) on Thursday, October 20, 2011, from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm EDT. Ms. Alexander reviewed the draft VTC

agenda, which includes presentations on the EM program; Chairs' top topics and achievements; FY 2012-2013 budget; American Recovery and Reinvestment Act close-out; waste disposition updates; and the revision of DOE Order 435.1.

Ms. Alexander noted that this meeting will be the first Chairs' meeting to utilize the VTC format and cautioned that the technology is not conducive to rapid back-and-forth discussion. Therefore, in order to better facilitate exchanges between the speakers and the Chairs, participants will be asked to speak only when their site is called.

Around the Complex

Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board – Don Bridges

- The SRS CAB is scheduled to hold a public meeting on September 26-27, 2011, and an annual retreat on October 11-13, 2011. The issue of an uncertain disposition path for spent nuclear fuel will likely be a major focus of these meetings.

Portsmouth Site-Specific Advisory Board – Dick Snyder

- The PORTS SSAB has increased the frequency of its public meetings and now meets on a monthly basis in order to meet the deliverables requested by DOE. The board's major deliverables include:
 - Developing recommendations for siting an onsite disposal cell(s).
 - Reviewing comments on Engineering Evaluation & Cost Analyses, Records of Decision, and RCRA Facilities Investigations, for various buildings.
- The PORTS SSAB recently developed its FY 2012 work plan and realigned its subcommittees.
- Strong membership recruitment efforts are under way to increase the board's size. Ideally, the PORTS SSAB would like to have up to 20 members.

Paducah Citizens Advisory Board – Ralph Young

- Paducah CAB members are currently focused on historic preservation and political issues related to the reprocessing of uranium mill tailings and recycling.
- They are also looking forward to hosting the EM SSAB Chairs' meeting in April 2012.

Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board – Ralph Phelps

- The NNM CAB will hold its next meeting on September 28, 2011, in Taos, New Mexico. The meeting agenda will include a discussion on whether to increase NNM CAB membership up to its authorized ceiling of 27 members.
- Three NNM CAB members met with staffers from Senator Tom Udall's office on September 14, 2011, to discuss the board's priorities. The Senator's staff committed to sending representatives to future NNM CAB public meetings.

Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board – Walt Wegst

- The NSSAB has finalized its FY 2012 work plan and is currently focused on preparing comments on the NNSS site-wide EIS.

- The NSSAB will welcome six new members in October 2011.

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board – Maggie Owen

- The ORSSAB held elections in September for new board officers. Ms. Maggie Owen was elected Chair, and Mr. Edward Juarez was elected Vice Chair.
- Additionally, the ORSSAB recently welcomed nine new members, new DOE committee liaisons, and a new Federal Coordinator.

Hanford Advisory Board – Susan Leckband

- The HAB held a public meeting on September 8-9, 2011, and received its work scope from the Tri-Party Agencies for FY 2012.
- The HAB submitted two pieces of advice to DOE in September:
 - [Recommendation 249](#): Draft Hanford Site Third CERCLA Five Year Review Report
 - [Recommendation 250](#): Waste Management Area-C Performance Assessment
- Hanford was recently visited by Acting EM Assistant Secretary David Huizenga and Undersecretary Tom D'Agostino. Additionally, Glen Podonsky, the DOE Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer, came to Hanford to talk about the site's beryllium program plan and how it will be used as a benchmark for other programs across the complex.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Alexander thanked the participants for their time and adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm EDT.